

DETAILED ACTION

This action is responsive the amendment filed on 6/17/2009. Claims 29-48 are pending.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claims 29-37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Excel (Microsoft® Excel 2000, Copyright (c) 1985-1999 Microsoft Corp.)

Claim 29: Excel discloses a grid canvas, comprising

- a. a canvas (Fig. 5: white surface area);
- b. a gridline on the canvas (Fig. 5: gridline between B and C), wherein the gridline is one of a plurality of components (Fig. 5: cells, tabs, etc.) on the canvas;
- c. a user-interface element (an element with which a user can interface (i.e. interact) Fig. 5: box) that spans multiple cells on the canvas, wherein the user-interface element is one of the plurality of components on the canvas, and wherein
- d. a property (i.e. location of the gridline on the canvas as explicitly shown by the Width: 14.00 (103 pixels), See Fig. 8) set (i.e. set by the user, such as by moving

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- the gridline, Fig. 6-8) for the gridline defines a relationship (e.g. geometric) of the gridline to the user-interface element on the canvas (Fig. 7),
- e. a layout (i.e. arrangement, taking up more or less space on the canvas, Fig. 6-8) of the user-interface element on the canvas is determined by the property set for the gridline (moving the gridline to the left as shown in Fig. 8, minimizes the user interface element, thereby changing its layout on the canvas), and
 - f. the relationship is maintained between the gridline and the user-interface element (Fig. 6-8.)

Claim 30: Excel discloses the grid canvas according to claim 29, wherein the gridline is defined by at least one of: a row; a column; or at least one row and at least one column (Fig. 5.)

Claim 31: Excel discloses the grid canvas according to claim 30, wherein the row or the column are, respectively, a virtual row or virtual column (Fig. 5.)

Claim 32: Excel discloses the grid canvas according to claim 29, further comprising a gridline bounding box (Fig. 5, bolded box) that includes the element.

Claim 33: Excel discloses the grid canvas according to claim 32, wherein the gridline bounding box comprises a plurality of rows (Fig. 5, 2-5) and columns (Fig. 1, B-C) that contain the user-interface element.

Claim 34: Excel discloses the grid canvas according to claim 32, further comprising margin settings within the gridline bounding box for providing desired offsets to the user-interface element (Fig. 9.)

Claim 35: Excel discloses the grid canvas according to claim 29, wherein a gridline defines a border of the canvas (Fig. 5.)

Claim 36: Excel discloses the grid canvas according to claim 29, wherein the relationship of the gridline to the user-interface element on the canvas is defined as an explicit value (Fig. 8 Width: 14.00 (103 pixels).)

Claim 37: Excel discloses the grid canvas according to claim 29, wherein the relationship of the gridline to the user-interface element on the canvas is defined as an auto value (the width of cells (elements) is an auto default of 64 pixels wide; Fig. 5.)

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 38-48 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Excel.

Claim 38: Excel discloses a method for creating a grid canvas, comprising

- a. identifying a canvas (Fig. 5: white surface area. Identification (by Excel) is inherent in order to display the program on the display as shown);
- b. defining a virtual gridline (Fig. 5: gridline between B and C) on the canvas, wherein the virtual gridline is one of a plurality of components (Fig. 5: cells, tabs, etc.) on the canvas;
- c. identifying a user-interface element (an element with which a user can interface (i.e. interact) Fig. 5: box) that spans multiple cells on the canvas, wherein the user-interface element is one of the plurality of components on the canvas and may be placed on the canvas at least one of:
 - a. before the virtual gridline is defined, or
 - b. after the virtual gridline is defined (Fig. 5, the element was placed after the default virtual gridline is displayed in Excel on startup);
- d. identifying a property (i.e. location of the gridline on the canvas as explicitly shown by the Width: 14.00 (103 pixels), See Fig. 7) set (i.e. set by the user, such as by moving the gridline, Fig. 6-8) for the virtual gridline, wherein the property defines a relationship (e.g. geometric, See Fig. 7) of the virtual gridline to the user-interface element on the canvas;
- e. changing a property of at least one of: the canvas, or the at least one of the plurality of components on the canvas (e.g. Fig. 1: expanding cell D10); and

- f. determining a layout (i.e. arrangement, taking up more or less space on the canvas, Fig. 6-8) of the user-interface element on the canvas, wherein the layout of the user-interface element is determined by the property set for the gridline (moving the gridline to the left as shown in Fig. 8, minimizes the user interface element, thereby changing its layout on the canvas);
- g. maintaining the relationship of the virtual gridline to the user-interface element on the canvas (Fig. 1,) wherein the relationship is bi-directional, and:
 - a. moving the gridline will resize the user-interface element (Fig. 6-8.)

However, Excel does not explicitly disclose wherein, resizing the user-interface element will move the gridline. Excel does disclose that the resizing of the user-interface element would move a gridline, such as shown in Fig. 9 (Fig. 7: 70, Fig. 10; changing the size via the “Size” panel, moves the gridlines surrounding the element correspondingly.) Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the two teachings in Excel in a fashion that the virtual gridline (such as one between columns B and C) would move in accordance with the changes in the element size. One would have been motivated to combine the teachings of Excel so as to dynamically and continuously encapsulate the element within the cell as the element and/or gridline is changed.

Claim 39: Excel discloses the method according to claim 38, wherein the step of identifying a relationship of the virtual gridline to the user-interface element on the canvas is repeated for a plurality of virtual gridlines and a plurality of user-interface

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elements (Fig. 1. It is inherent that a plurality of elements can be placed on the canvas. Identification (by Excel) is inherent in order to display the program on the display as shown.)

Claim 40: Excel discloses the method according to claim 38, further comprising adding a virtual gridline dynamically (i.e. continuously) to the canvas (Fig. 5: changes in the cells cause dynamic updating of gridlines.)

Claim 41: Excel discloses the method according to claim 38, further comprising: overlaying a grid on the canvas (Fig. 5), wherein the grid comprises a plurality of virtual gridlines (Fig. 5); identifying a relationship (Fig. 5: position of the gridline to the boundary of the element) of at least one of the plurality of virtual gridlines to at least one of the plurality of components on the canvas.

Claim 42: Excel discloses the method according to claim 38, further comprising adding a component on the grid (Fig. 1. It is inherent that a plurality of additional components can be placed on the canvas, such as the “2+2” element.)

Claim 43: Excel discloses the method according to claim 38, further comprising: placing the virtual gridline on the canvas according to a predetermined relationship of the virtual gridline to at least one of the plurality of components on the canvas (gridline is placed to outline the cells: Fig. 1.)

Claim 44: Excel discloses the method according to claim 38, further comprising placing the virtual gridline on the canvas (selection of “Gridlines” options overlays a grid, Fig. 2); identifying a relationship of the virtual gridline to at least one of the plurality of components on the canvas according to the placement of the gridline on the canvas (Fig. 1: position of the gridline to the boundary of the element.)

Claim 45: Excel discloses the method according to claim 38, further comprising adding a component to the canvas; maintaining the relationship of the virtual gridline to the element on the canvas (Fig. 1: It is inherent that a plurality of additional components can be placed on the canvas, such as the “2+2” element.)

Claim 46: Excel discloses the method according to claim 38, wherein the virtual gridline is defined by a plurality of rows and columns (Fig. 5) that define a plurality of virtual cells (Fig. 1: A1-H25), and at least one of the plurality of components (Fig. 3: “USPTO banner”) spans a plurality of the virtual cells (Fig. 3: B14-H16.)

Claim 47: Excel discloses the method of claim 46, further comprising adding a component to the canvas, wherein the added component inhabits at least one of the same cells of the plurality of virtual cells inhabited by the at least one of the plurality of components (Fig. 4.)

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Claim 48: Excel discloses the method of claim 38, further comprising determining a virtual gridline bounding box for the element (Fig. 5: bolded box.)

Response to Arguments

5. Applicant's arguments filed 6/17/2009 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

6. Applicant argues that a property set in Excel is for an image, and not for the gridline, and as such, setting properties from the perspective of the gridline is not the same as setting a property from the perspective of an image, or user interface element (as claimed.) The Examiner respectfully disagrees.

Fig. 7 of Excel is a dialog window for setting certain properties (such as object positioning) of user interface element such as an image. Fig. 8 illustrates another different property, such as the width of 103 pixels in relation to the gridline, which is not an image. The property of the gridline as taught in Fig. 8 of Excel, (i.e. the position of the gridline on the canvas as further depicted by the Width of 103 pixel, or 103 pixels from the gridline forming the A column) identifies a relationship of the gridline to the user interface element, such that changing the horizontal position (i.e. the width) of the gridline has a corresponding effect on the user interface element.

Applicant's further argument that resizing of the image after the steps as shown in Figures with regard to Excel does not produce a "bi-directional" relationship is not persuasive as such a limitation is not recited in claim 29.

With respect to claim 38, Applicant argues that Excel does not teach or address in the Office Action a "bi-directional" relationship as claimed. The Examiner respectfully disagrees. The last paragraph of the rejection of claim 38 lays out an obvious type rejection with respect to the second aspect of a bi-directional relationship, "movement of a gridline upon resizing of the image":

However, Excel does not explicitly disclose wherein, resizing the user-interface element will move the gridline. Excel does disclose that the resizing of the user-interface element would move a gridline, such as shown in Fig. 9 (Fig. 7: 70, Fig. 10; changing the size via the "Size" panel, moves the gridlines surrounding the element correspondingly.) Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the two teachings in Excel in a fashion that the virtual gridline (such as one between columns B and C) would move in accordance with the changes in the element size. One would have been motivated to combine the teachings of Excel so as to dynamically and continuously encapsulate the element within the cell as the element and/or gridline is changed.

Conclusion

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Andrew Belousov whose telephone number is (571) 270-1695. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri (alternate Fri off) EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Stephen Hong can be reached on (571) 272-4124. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-3800. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO

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Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call
800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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/Steven P Sax/

Primary Examiner, Art Unit 2174

10/21/2009